Merry Christmas Stories

Edited and Pictured by
"JUST RIGHT" AUTHORS and ARTISTS

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The University of
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at Chapel Hill

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MERRY CHRISTMAS STORIES

The Fairies who knew all places
(*Story Why the Top Sings*)

Merry Christmas Stories

GOOD CHEER TALES FROM
"JUST RIGHT" EDITIONS

WITH COVER DRAWING BY

MILO WINTER

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To Authors: Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, Edna Groff Deihl, Laura Rountree Smith, Caroline S. June.

To Artists: Francis Kerr Cook, Violet Moore Higgins, Joseph E. Dash, Mildred Lyon, Genevieve Fusch Samsel.

At the end of each story the reader will note that the story has been selected from one of our own Just Right Books. The title and author are named.

The Publishers.

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THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'TWAS the night before Christmas, when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a luster of midday to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now, *Prancer!* and *Vixen!*
On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!* on, *Donner!* and *Blitzen!*
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew
With the sleigh full of toys and St. Nicholas too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof—
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in furs from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples—how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"*Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!*"

CLEMENT C. MOORE

The twinkling stars were having a holiday.

MERRY CHRISTMAS STORIES

THE STAR ANGEL

Long, long ago all the twinkling Stars of Skyland were having a holiday.

It was a beautiful night, so bright that one of the tiniest stars thought that he had made a mistake, and that he had come out in the daytime.

As he looked about him he saw Mother Moon on her throne, smiling a happy smile, and then

he knew it was really night, and that he had made no mistake.

All the stars were twinkling merrily. In all Skyland there could not be found one unhappy star.

"This is a wonderful night," said Venus, the brightest star of all. "The most wonderful night I have ever seen.

"Look down upon Judea's hills.

"Do you see the loving shepherds keeping watch over their flocks? Then look toward the east, and notice that strange moving caravan.

"I think they are wise men from the East. Do you see how they seem to be looking up into our own Skyland? The very air to-night seems full of mystery."

"I feel exactly as if something were going to happen," said little Brightpoints.

"So do I," said Merry Twinkler, "and it must be something very wonderful, for I feel like singing all the time."

Suddenly Mother Moon leaned far over and gazed into the east.

"Look, children, am I right? I seem to see the most beautiful star I have ever seen. It is coming out of the East, a strange star, I think, which has never come before to the blue meadows of Skyland.

"It seems to me I see all the sky fairies in their cloud chariots moving back to make room for her."

The little stars looked toward the east. It was indeed true. There they saw a most beautiful Star shining like a great diamond. On, on the Star came with thousands of little star followers in her train.

"Who can she be?" asked Mother Moon. "She is far, far brighter even than our Venus. She is brighter than all of us shining ones put together. Who can she be?"

Breathlessly the little Stars watched from their sky homes. They saw the Wise Men hurrying across the desert, their eyes always upon the wonderful star, their path always following where she led.

On, on the Star came, until she reached a spot from which she could look directly down upon the hillsides of Judea, where the gentle shepherds were watching their sleeping flocks.

There, in the midst of the many, many twinkling stars, she stood still, with her bright beams pointed directly below her.

"Who are you, beautiful stranger?" murmured all the little twinkling Stars and fixed Stars,

Mother Moon and the Sky Fairies added, "And why have you come to visit us?"

"I am indeed a stranger," said the beautiful one. "I am God's Star Angel."

"A star angel!" said the little Stars. "How wonderful! Why did you hurry across the sky, and then so suddenly stop, and point downward to the shepherds and to the sleeping town nearby? We see only what we see every night —the sleeping fathers and mothers and babies, and the gentle shepherds watching their flocks."

"It is because you do not have the eyes of faith," replied the Star Angel. "I will pray to God to give the eyes of faith to you for a moment so that you may see as I see."

Suddenly the little Stars felt a wonderful peace come to them, a peace that passed all their understanding. Mother Moon in awe covered her face with her cloud mantle.

"I am God's Star Angel"

Then the Stars saw a stable, bare and rude, and with their new and keener sight they were able to see right inside. There, among the cattle, in a bed of hay, lay a baby—the most wonderful and blessed baby that ever was born on earth.

In a bed of hay, lay a baby

Never had the Stars in all their long night watches stood guard over such a one! For the whole world was to worship as its Heavenly Prince the little babe that now lay with smiling face on its bed of hay in the lowly stable.

"It is enough," said Mother Moon. "God has been very good to us this holy night."

No sooner had she spoken than down through Skyland same the sound of rustling wings. The little Stars saw a host of angels, with beautiful gauzy wings, which were never before seen either on earth or in the blue meadows of the sky.

The watching shepherds, too, gazed in breathless wonder as these winged angels filled the air with music, and these were the words they sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

Then one bright-winged angel told the shepherds the wonderful story of a new-born king, which was Christ the Lord.

As the song ended, the shining angels rose into the great beyond, guided by the blazing star. Once again Mother Moon and all the million Baby Stars were left alone in the meadows of Skyland.

Down below, on the earth, the people slept on. The sheep were still on the hillsides, although some of the shepherds were now finding their way to the tiny stable to worship the new king of whom the angels had sung.

Outside the stable door the Wise Men left the camels on which they had come from far distant countries in the east, after they had taken from the camels' backs the precious gifts which they had brought to give to the Holy Babe.

"Good night, children," said Mother Moon to the Stars, as the first light of the dawn appeared.

"We will never again have such a night as this, for we have seen the Baby King of Kings, and have helped to celebrate the First Christmas."

From the Three Books—Edna Groff Deihl

THE LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS

The Child did not expect that his letter would be answered, but he wrote it just the same. It was merry Christmas time, when the frost on the window panes made pictures of Santa Claus' country far away in the north, when sleigh bells like those of Santa Claus' sleigh could be heard and when the toy shops were full of pretty things which were being bought for the children.

So the Child wrote a letter, all by himself, and this is what it said:

"Dear Santa Claus:

"Please do not pass our house on Christmas Eve. It is a small house and very full with me and mother and the two babies, but you will know it by the candle in the window. Please bring us some Christmas presents."

Then the Child folded the letter and laid it on the doorstep, and suddenly it was whisked away by the wind.

Crackling cheerfully and not minding the cold in the least, the letter to Santa Claus blew along the street until it fell right under the cane of a very old gentleman who looked like Santa Claus because of his long beard, but who also looked very stern.

"Bother Christmas!" this old gentleman had been saying to himself, as he thought of the pairs and pairs of socks and slippers, and the dozens of neckties he would receive. But he picked up the letter and read it.

It was the Merry Christmas ***time***

"This letter was meant for me," he said, as he started to stuff it into his great-coat pocket; but the letter to Santa Claus was not going to be caught yet! It blew out of the old gentleman's hand.

Rattling in a cheerful way, on blew the letter along the street until it went right into the muff of a little old lady who looked, with her white hair and her rosy cheeks, as if she might have been Mrs. Santa Claus.

"Lonesome Christmas!" this little old lady had been saying to herself, as she thought of all her little boys and girls grown up and not hanging up their stockings any longer. But she opened the letter and read it.

"This letter was meant for me," she said to herself, as she held it up and read it; but the letter to Santa Claus had not finished its trip.

No, indeed, it had not. Rustling its Christmas secret as it hurried along with the wind, the letter jumped right into the basket of a toymaker on his way home from his shop.

The basket was full of cleverly carved wooden animals and games and little dolls and dolls' dishes, all of polished wood.

"Tiresome Christmas!" the toymaker had been grumbling to himself, as he started to put it deep down in his basket; but the letter to Santa Claus was not going to be caught yet.

It flew out of the toymaker's basket and turned over and over like the cap of some gay little harlequin, until it blew right into the face of another child walking alone past the windows of the Christmas shops.

This second child had been selecting toys he did not already have, hoping that he would

receive more, and this was difficult because he had so many playthings. But he could read, and he read all the words of the letter to Santa Claus.

"This letter was meant for me!" said this child, and he stuffed it in his pocket and there it stayed, for it was now a little torn from traveling.

Then it came to be the blessed Christmas Eve, and through the snow and the chiming of the bells and the green-trimmed markets and the scarlet-trimmed shops, came four people.

And one was the little old gentleman who looked like Santa Claus. And one was the little old lady who looked like Mrs. Santa Claus. And one was the toymaker who looked like one of Santa Claus' helpers. And one was a boy with the letter to Santa Claus in his hand.

At the cross-roads these four people bumped right into each other, and they were so loaded with good things that they became frightfully mixed up.

"It will be a small house!" said the old gentleman, as he shouldered his hobby horse more securely.

"It will be a full house with a mother and the Child and two babies," said the little old lady, as she picked up a bag of sugar cakes she had dropped.

"It will be a house with a candle in the window," said the toymaker, as he held his most beautiful big Noah's Ark high in order not to spill out the many animals.

"It will be a house where the Child wrote a letter to Santa Claus," said the boy, who carried all his best toys in his arms, the toys which he would have most liked to keep.

"Why, here is the house for which we were looking!" the four exclaimed, as the light of the candle the Child had set in the window shone out and showed them the door.

But this was a story about a letter written to Santa Claus. Did it ever reach him? Yes. It really and truly did, and as long as there was a scrap of its paper left the letter crackled to itself with its Christmas joke. For Santa Claus is to be found wherever there is love and kindness at Christmas time. And a letter may reach him in a great many different and mysterious ways.

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

OLD MOTHER BEAR'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Old Mother Bear sat in her red rocking chair knitting and singing:

"Click, click, click, I must hurry because

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus."

She was finishing a stocking to hang up by the chimney for Santa Claus to fill.

At this very minute she heard rap-a-tap on the door, and she sang:

"Click, click, click, who comes here?
Rap, a tap, a tap, visitors appear."

Charley Chatterbox *Old Shaggy Brother*

In came Charlie Chatter-Box, the monkey, saying:

"I am Charlie Chatter-Box—sad because,
I've no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus."

He wiped his eyes on his 5-cent pocket handkerchief and Old Mother Bear felt so sorry for him she finished the stocking she was knitting in a hurry, and gave it to him.

Charlie Chatter-Box thanked her and went off saying:

"Merry Christmas comes in song and rhyme,

Old Mother Bear may you have a good time."

Old Mother Bear was a wonderful knitter, and soon she had another stocking nearly finished. She sang as before:

"Click, click, click, I must hurry because,

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus."

Then a light foot-fall was heard outside:

On the window-pane she heard such a clatter,

She got right up to see what was the matter!

Old Shaggy Brother, the tramp dog, stood there saying:

"Santa Claus comes as I remember,

May I warm my paws in old December?"

Old Mother Bear let him in, of course, and

Sister Pussy Whiskers

Cousin Nanny Goat

as he sat and warmed his paws by the fire, he said in a mournful way that he had no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus, and he cried into his 10-cent pocket handkerchief.

Old Mother Bear's needles clicked faster and faster, and soon she had a stocking ready for Old Shaggy Brother.

He went dancing off, saying:

"I wish you a Merry Christmas I do declare,
Dear little, queer little, Old Mother Bear."

Old Mother Bear set up another stocking and began to knit faster and faster, singing:

"Click, click, click, I must hurry because,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus."

Ting-a-ling rang the telephone and Sister Pussy Whiskers called:

"Hello, hello, Old Mother Bear,
I am very sad I do declare,
It may be hard for you to believe,
I've no stocking to hang up on Christmas Eve."

Old Mother Bear could hear her weeping into her new 25-cent pocket handkerchief so she said she would mail her a stocking to-morrow.

Sister Pussy Whiskers called "Merry Christ-

mas!" and Old Mother Bear went back to her knitting, singing:

"I'll set up a new stocking as sure as fate,
Santa Claus comes, I must not be late."

Then, as she worked away busily, she heard a great roaring and crying outside, and a voice said:

"Hear the Mad March Hare roaring out of season,
I need a stocking, that is the reason!"

Old Mother Bear opened the door and invited the Mad March Hare in.

He ran wildly about the room and tangled up her yarn, and it was one hour and thirty-two minutes before Old Mother Bear could get him to sit down and dry his fur and whiskers.

He said:

"I am roaring this way because,

I've no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus."

Old Mother Bear said:

"Just calm yourself and with me stay,

I'll give you this stocking in a week and a day."

The Mad March Hare was happy to stay in the warm house and he did all the house work while Old Mother Bear's needles clicked away.

He made a furious dust when he swept the floor and broke a good many dishes, but he said:

"You must not really think me bad,

It is just my nature to be mad."

When at last he went off with his stocking Old Mother Bear drew a sigh of relief. He called back to her:

"I hope Old Santa will fill *your* stocking too,
Merry, Merry Christmas, Mother Bear, to you."

Then suddenly, and without any warning whatever, Cousin Nanny Goat and Sammy Small Tail the Rabbit came bounding in, crying:

"We've no stockings to hang by the fireside
For miles we ran and cried, and cried!"

Old Mother Bear replied:

"Do dry your eyes, oh dear, oh dear,
I've a pair of stockings left from last year."

Then Cousin Nanny Goat dried her eyes on her blue silk pocket handkerchief and Sammy Small Tail dried his eyes on his red silk pocket handkerchief, and they watched Old Mother Bear go to a chest and draw out a pair of stockings!

As she gave them to those cunning animals, they sang:

"You're so good we'll not shed another tear,
We wish you Merry Christmas every year."

As they danced off with their stockings, it grew nearer and nearer Christmas Eve.

One evening as Sammy Small Tail hopped by Old Mother Bear's house, he peeped in the window. There she sat still in her red rocking chair. The knitting needles lay idle on the window-sill, but they could see things with their eyes. They said:

"She will have no presents now because,
She has no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus."

Now, Sammy Small Tail went off in a hurry when he heard this, saying:

"Hippety-hop, I have the habit,
Of carrying news," says Sammy Rabbit.

He called all the animals together and said:

"I have some news, it's rather shocking,
Old Mother Bear hangs up no stocking!"

The animals asked:

"Why doesn't she hang it up this year
For Santa Claus will soon appear?"

Sammy Small Tail replied:

"Click, click, click, the needles say,
She gave every stocking she had away."

One and all, the animals went to work and made a stocking three feet long and one foot wide. They made it for Old Mother Bear!

Charley Chatter-Box put in a cocoanut and Old Shaggy Brother put in an orange and Sister Pussy Whiskers put in an apple and Cousin Nanny Goat put in a plum, and the Mad March Hare put in a new cup and saucer and Sammy

Old Mother Bear and Santa Claus Danced a Hornpipe

Small Tail put in a cookie.

They crept to Old Mother Bear's house and crept to the window and stole in silently and hung up the stocking.

They pinned a card on it which said:

"One good turn deserves another,
Here is a stocking for Old Bear Mother."

Old Mother Bear by and by began to rock to and fro, half awake, singing sleepily:

"Click, click, click, I must hurry because,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus."

True enough, Santa Claus was on his way.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, went his sleigh bells.

He filled all the animals' stockings and when he came to the house of Old Mother Bear and saw her big stocking he laughed until his sides shook, saying:

"It's a great big stocking I do declare,
How can I fill it for Old Mother Bear?"

Then Old Mother Bear woke up and she and Santa Claus danced a hornpipe, and for all I know they are dancing yet.

They must have had a merry time because,
When up the chimney went Santa Claus,
He wore new red socks I do declare,
Carefully knit by Old Mother Bear!

From the Gingerbread Boy—Laura Rountree Smith

THE STORY OF BABY GRETEL

Baby Gretel was just a little wooden doll made in Doll-land. She really could not remember the first part of her life; all she could remember was that she was "modeled," that was it—she had just been "made."

One day one of the workmen brought his little girl to the doll factory to see the dolls before they were sent away. As soon as Baby Gretel

caught a glimpse of the round little face of the little girl, a great longing came into the doll's heart. She knew she could love that little girl. "I wish she could be my mother," Baby Gretel, the doll, said.

The little girl soon went away, and not long after Baby Gretel was packed in a box and sent away with thousands of other dolls. She did not know where she was going, but she traveled on and on. As she lay in the hold of the boat she knew that she must be crossing an ocean, for she could hear the waves beating against the steel sides of the boat, and she could feel the motion as the ship rolled and pitched on the water. As Baby Gretel traveled, she dreamed of the face of the little foreign girl she had loved.

One day Baby Gretel was awakened by a great noise and clatter. The ship had stopped;

then the noise of the machinery of the boat was quiet; they had reached the other side of the ocean.

The box Baby Gretel was packed in was lifted out of the hold of the ship, and was hauled away to a storehouse, and afterwards to a great store, where the box was unpacked, and where Baby Gretel was placed on a counter to be sold.

Strange people who came into the store looked at her, and handled her, and talked about her. She found herself on the counter together with many other strange dolls, French and Dutch and Japanese and American dolls. There was quite a clatter all around when the different dolls started talking, as no doll could understand the language of the others.

Baby Gretel listened carefully to the talk of the people who came in to see the dolls, and

No doll could understand the language of the others

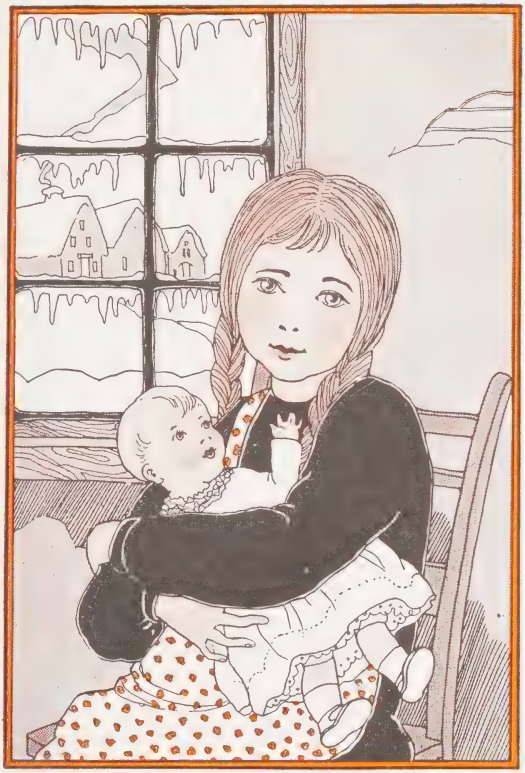
to the conversation of the other dolls, and at last she understood that she was in America, and that it was almost Christmas time.

One day a great clatter arose in the doll section of the store. One of the dolls had overheard that there was a great and terrible war being waged in the lands from which they had come.

"Dear me, we should be very glad that we are in America!" one of the dolls exclaimed.

While Baby Gretel was still thinking about this, a dear little American girl came to the doll counter, and picked her up, and at once Baby Gretel loved this little American girl almost as much as she had loved the little foreign girl.

"I want this dolly, Mother," said the little American girl, as she looked at Baby Gretel, and petted and cuddled her in her arms. "I'd like to send this dolly to some little girl over there in the war land. See, the dolly is marked Made in Doll-land! I'm sorry for the little foreign girls, because they have to get along with so little, and haven't any money to buy dollies with."



Then came the parting

So the little girl's mother bought Baby Gretel, and for days and weeks the little girl played with the doll and sewed dresses for her.

While Baby Gretel lived in the little girl's home Christmas time came, and the doll heard all about the wonderful Christ Child who came to the earth on the first Christmas day to comfort the sorrowing, and to bring love into people's lives instead of misery.

Then came the parting. With many kisses, and a few tears, the doll was packed in a box, with a cheery Christmas note of love, and started on her way to a little girl whose home had been made sorrowful by the great war.

So Baby Gretel traveled back again over the deep waters. And when she reached the end of her journey, she saw a land very different from America.

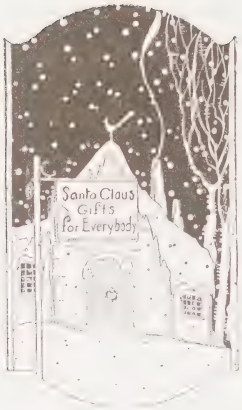
The big factories were not filled with busy industry; the children did not sing and dance

happily. This made Baby Gretel sorrowful, until the day when she was given to a sad-eyed little girl. As Baby Gretel looked up into the face of her new little mistress, the doll saw at once that it was the changed face of the little friend she had seen only once, but whom she had never forgotten—the blue-eyed, golden-braided little girl of her own country.

"My dearest!" the little girl sobbed, "I am so happy to have you!" She clasped the doll close to her. "This war has been so terrible!" she sighed.

As Baby Gretel lay in the arms of her dear, new-found mother, the doll tried to give the little foreign girl the message of the Christmas time which she had learned in her American home, and tried to tell the little girl whom war had saddened, the message of "Peace on earth, good will to men."

From the Three Books—Edna Groff Deihl



THE TREE THAT TRIMMED ITSELF

"I wish, oh, how I wish!" sighed the young Pine Tree, as the Christmas wind blew through its branches, "that I might be a Christmas Tree with decorations like my brother who was cut down!"

The forest was very still and cold. It was Christmas Eve, the season of wonder, but very few trees had been cut for the children. So many tall, strong ones would soon be needed

for building homes and for kindling fires and for making furniture. But, oh, the happiness of a Christmas Tree sparkling in the light of the home fire, with a circle of happy children dancing about it! No wonder that the young Pine Tree sighed again in the wind.

"I wish that I might be trimmed for Christmas!" it whispered.

Suddenly something happened there in the woods. Floating down among the outspread branches of the Pine Tree came white stars, shaped and shining like crystals.

More and then still more snow stars fell, until every twig of every branch of the tree held a white Christmas star.

They were more beautiful than any ornaments that the toyman had for trimming a Christmas Tree.

But still the young Pine Tree longed for all the honors its brother tree would have. "I wish that I might hear the Christmas chimes!" it sighed in the wind.

Then the night grew colder and colder. The frost came through the forest and stopped beside the Pine Tree, hanging sharp, hard icicles to the tips of the twigs.

Whenever the wind touched the Tree the icicles tinkled and rang like a chime of tiny Christmas bells. They made soft, beautiful Christmas music.

But still the young Pine Tree was not satisfied. "I wish," it sighed, "that I might hold lights as my brother will on this Christmas Eve."

Suddenly then the stars shone out in the dark sky and dropped their beams of light down as far as the branches of the young Pine Tree.

One star seemed to leave the sky and rest on the topmost twig of the Pine Tree. There it flamed and flashed like a beacon to call every one to see the wonders of Christmas Eve. The Pine Tree was lighted as brightly as if it carried a hundred candles, but still it had a wish.

"I am not yet a Christmas Tree!" it sighed. "I wish that I might hold gifts among my branches." And it seemed as this wish could never come true, for where could Christmas gifts be found in the wintry forest?

Christmas Eve changed to the very early dawning of Christmas Day. Still the Pine Tree wore its snow stars. Its icicle chimes rang in the clear, cold air, and the light of the sky shone in its branches like a Christmas light. And out from the shelter of a nest among its roots crept a tiny field mouse, cold and hungry.

How nice! Hanging to the Pine Tree, just above the nest of the mouse, was a bunch of berries and its trailing vine.

The vine had twined itself around the trunk of the Tree in the summer time and now, in the deep winter, its bright berries hung there, a gift on Christmas morning for the hungry little mouse.

And out from the shelter of the trunk of the Pine Tree came a squirrel. He, too, was hungry. But he scampered along the branch until he came to the part of the Tree where it had held tightly, in spite of the winter gales, a fat brown cone.

The squirrel held the cone daintily in his paws, cut out the seeds and munched them.

It was his holiday breakfast and how good it tasted! No better Christmas gift could have come to the squirrel than that fat pine cone so full of seeds.

"Merry Christmas!" called the children, running into the woods later on the morning of

"Merry Christmas!"

Christmas Day. "Merry Christmas, little Pine Tree. We have brought a gift for your snow bird. We heard him calling yesterday."

In their red caps and mittens, the happy children came dancing through the woods with a bundle of ripe grain.

They reached up as far as they could and hung it by a gay red ribbon to one of the green branches of the little Pine Tree. Then they exclaimed, and they stood farther back in the path, for the snow bird came out from an empty nest among the branches which grew thickest to feast on the grain.

"The snow bird rested in a cradle on Christmas Eve!" the children said to each other. "The little Pine Tree must have held that empty nest very closely all the fall and winter to give the snow bird a Christmas cradle!"

And the little Pine Tree stood up straight and happy there in the woods on Christmas morning, for all of its wishes had come true. It had trimmed itself with stars and had heard the chimes and had offered its gifts to its little neighbors of the forest. And still it could grow for the building of homes when it was an older, larger pine!

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

THE CHRISTMAS JOKE

They were all there in a crowd, the merry family of the Christmas-Wrappings, making ready for their journeys on Christmas Eve. And because there were so many of them, all the little Labels, the bright little Christmas Seals, the rustling Tissue-Paper members of the Christmas-Wrapping family and the stay-at-home-one, the long-haired Paste-Brush, it isn't surprising

that there was some confusion among them, particularly as Paste-Brush had most of the work to do.

Paste-Brush was the eldest of the family of the Christmas-Wrappings and always spent Christmas at home. So the Santa Claus Label, the Snow Boy Label, the Jack Frost Label and all the small Holly Seals did not mind in the least making the poor old Paste-Brush a whole lot of extra work by pushing and tumbling about and begging to be stuck first on the beautiful Christmas gifts.

And every single Label and Seal wanted to be put on the box which held the French Doll. They mixed themselves with the Tissue-Papers in the crowd.

They tried to find places on the top of the pile when old Paste-Brush came out of his jar, ready to stick them, and every one of the Christ-

mas-Wrappings family had his or her very good reason for starting out with the French Doll. Who would not have wanted to? The French Doll had golden curls and a pink silk dress and wore blue satin slippers!

"Stick me to her box!" crackled the Snow Boy Label. "I am different from the rest of the family and I want to belong in the house where she will go."

But all the Paste-Brush, working busily, said to this was "Splosh!"

"Stick me to her box!" rustled the Scarlet Paper. "I am brighter than the other Papers and better suited for wrapping up the French Doll."

But all that the Paste-Brush, trying not to spread himself too thickly, said to this was "Splash!"

"I am the one to be stuck to her box!" rattled the stiff, large Santa Claus Label. "I was made to direct expensive gifts to the children on Christmas Eve."

And then there came a chorus of small rustlings from the little Seals, all of them begging to be allowed to help wrap the French Doll; but the old Paste-Brush, who was wise, having been used for so many holiday seasons, replied to them only, "Splash, splosh," and went on busily with his work.

There were many Christmas gifts being wrapped; large, costly gifts such as come from a shop, and small, blessed gifts such as are made by the hands of children, and among the latter was the humble Rag Doll. She was made of neat rolls of cloth so that she could sit down and move her arms. She had two yellow braids

of hair made of yellow yarn. She had a nicely painted face and wore a red and white checked gingham dress.

The Rag Doll had been made by the children who do not receive French Dolls from the shops, and she was a doll made to be loved, but none of the Christmas-Wrappings cared to have anything to do with her. The Tissue-Papers curled themselves away from the Rag Doll.

The Labels and the Seals tried to scatter themselves when it was time to do her up.

There was a very great confusion, but at last everything was ready for Christmas Eve and the gifts started out.

Nobody remained behind except the old Paste-Brush, who was quite ready to dry himself and rest for a while; but before he settled down in his empty jar the Paste-Brush made a discovery.

In his haste he had mixed up the Labels!

A little girl named Joy was also ready for Christmas, waiting for a new French Doll, and wondering where she would put it when it came, for Joy was a little girl who had many beautiful dolls and many dresses for them, and many more toys than she could use.

And when a box was brought to her on Christmas morning, she knew just what the Christmas-Wrappings were saying to her.

"Merry Christmas, Joy!" said the Wrappings, "and here is a very expensive and beautiful gift for you, bought with a great deal of money.

"We feel honored at bringing it to you," crackled and rustled the Santa Claus Label, the little Holly-Seals and the Crimson-Tissue. They knew what they held. It was the French Doll. And so Joy opened her gift on Christmas morning.

But, oh, what a surprise! If they had known it, the Wrappings would have come undone on the way.

They had not brought the French Doll, but the Humble Rag Doll made of rolls of cloth so that she could sit down and move her arms, with yellow hair made of yarn and wearing a red and white checked gingham dress.

But she was a doll made by someone to be loved and Joy held the humble Rag Doll close to her heart, for she loved her at once. The Paste-Brush, so old and wise about Christmas, may have known after all that he was changing the Christmas-Wrappings. And the Wrappings themselves agreed with the Santa Claus Label, as they spent Christmas in the Scrap Basket and talked it all over, that they had been mistaken in wishing to bring a little girl only a French Doll.

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

Everything in the house was ready for Christmas.

The Christmas tree stood in the center of the living room, shining with gold and silver cobwebs.

It was trimmed with colored balls and apples and gilded nuts. The stockings hung in a row above the fireplace. There was Hilda's long stocking and Halmar's middle sized one and Gregory's smaller one. The house was swept and clean. And over the pictures and down the staircase there were twined long ropes of evergreen. Each one in the family had planned a loving gift for someone else in the family. All the gifts, tied with scarlet ribbon, were piled beneath the Christmas tree.

"Now we will go to bed," said Halmar, "and when we wake it will be Christmas morning."

"Yes, everything is ready," said Gregory.

"Oh, no, we have forgotten something," said Hilda. "We have forgotten that every house on

On Christmas Eve a candle light

Christmas Eve should have a lighted candle in the front window."

So the children found a tall white Christmas candle. They set it in a candlestick.

They lighted it and put it in the front window. Its small, bright flame flickered there and glowed. It shone out through the window-pane making a narrow path of light on the snowy sidewalk outside.

"Now we will say the story about the Christmas candle that great-grandmother taught us," Hilda said, so the children repeated it together.

"On Christmas Eve a candle light
To shine abroad through Christmas night,
That those who pass may see its glow
And walk with Christ a mile or so."

Then the children went to bed. The house was very still. There was no light save that of the Christmas candle shining in the front window.

As the candle burned and sparkled there in the window a very rich old gentleman walked by. He was on his way to his great white house on the top of the hill. He was planning to keep Christmas alone.

Then he stepped into the path which the Christmas candle made in the snow. He felt the key to his house which he held, as if it were a burning coal. He hurried on and the light of the Christmas candle led him up the hill and to his great white house there. He unlocked the door and opened it wide.

Then he sent his servants down to the village at that late hour to invite a great many children

to come up the hill in the morning as his Christmas guests.

A child with her mother came down the street now doing some late shopping, for the stores were open on Christmas Eve. The child held a bright silver piece tightly in her hand.

She stopped in front of a toy shop where there were ever so many beautiful gifts. There were dolls and bright picture books and dolls' houses and little dishes with the patterns of flowers.

"This is my very own money," thought the child. "I saved it for Christmas. Now I shall buy that lady doll in the pink silk dress all for myself."

But just then the child looked down at the snow. She saw that she was standing in the light of the Christmas candle. It shone also upon the

piece of silver in her hand. She turned away from the toy shop window. "We will go on further," the child said to her mother, "and I will buy the workbox that Grandmother wants."

And soon a stranger passed by. He had been away from home a long, long time. Everyone in the little brown house where he used to live had missed him very much, but he had not written them a letter in many years.

He had been on ships and had seen beautiful far away cities. He had found gold and precious stones. He was looking now for the little brown house where he used to live, but only because he was curious. He was not sure that he wanted to go inside it.

There it was. The curtains were parted. He could see the family inside sitting together, but

it was a small, poor house. He decided that he would pass by.

But he suddenly stopped. The light of the Christmas candle made a path up to the door of the little house.

The stranger felt as if it were guiding his feet. He hurried inside the gate and went up to the door. Then he went inside for Christmas.

Soon it was Christmas morning. The bells rang and the children awoke and everyone was very, very happy. Hilda and Halmar and Gregory opened their gifts. They danced about the Christmas tree and sang their Christmas carols.

Then they ran to the window and they found that the Christmas candle had burned down to the socket. They touched the blackened wick

that was all that was left to tell the story of the Chrismas candle.

"On Christmas Eve a candle light,
To shine abroad through Christmas night
That those who pass may see its glow
And walk with Christ a mile or so."

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

THE CHRISTMAS TREE THAT WENT WALKING

It was not a very large Christmas tree, only a little spruce that Hans had gone a long way from his city block to a wood lot and cut down. He had been able to cut it with his small axe and then he had brought the little spruce tree home on his shoulder and his father had made a green

stand in which it stood in the middle of the kitchen.

The Christmas tree was fragrant. There was nothing with which to trim it, but Hans' eyes shone with happiness as he looked at it. "I should like to show it to Tony!" he said, so he carried the little green Christmas tree in his arms to the next house to his in which Tony lived. Tony was an odd small boy from across the sea in Italy, but he was a boy who dearly loved to celebrate a holiday.

"It looks like something for a fiesta!" shouted Tony when Hans appeared at his door carrying the spruce tree. "I have a wax candle that we brought with us on the ship for luck to this new country. Wait! I will give it to the Christmas tree." And Tony brought a tall white candle

which the two little boys tied securely to the tip top of the pine tree.

"Jeanne would like to see our Christmas tree!" Tony said. "Her mother bakes cakes to sell in the shop on the other side of our street."

"Come, then, we will take the tree to Jeanne!" said Hans. And the two boys carried the green tree with its tall wax candle to the tiny shop that smelled so sweetly of sugar and spices, and in which Jeanne, a dark-eyed little girl from France, stood behind the counter and waited on customers.

Jeanne clapped her hands with delight as she saw it. "We must hang sweets upon the Christmas tree!" she said. "My mother has made many cookies in holiday shapes, stars and cres-

cents and leaves, and she has put icing on the top. I am sure that she will let us have enough Christmas cakes to trim the tree."

So the two little boys and Jeanne tied cookies in the shapes of stars and crescents and leaves with bright bits of ribbon to the spruce tree until its branches hung down richly. How pretty it looked! It had a tall wax candle on its top and it held gifts of Christmas cakes, iced with pink and white showing between the green twigs.

Jeanne took the boys' hands and they danced about the tree. Then Jeanne had a thought. "This is too beautiful a tree to stay here in our shop," she said. "I wish that we might show it to Sarah, who lives next door to me and who works with her father from morning until night making wreaths of mistletoe and holly, with no time to play."

"Come, then," said Hans, "we will take the Christmas tree to Sarah," and with that the little spruce tree went on its Christmas way.

Hans and Tony carried it very carefully and Jeanne ran along beside to see that the candle stood up straight and none of the cookies fell off. On went the Christmas tree until the children came to Sarah's house.

It was a kind of Christmas place, but Sarah's fingers were sore and her back was tired from the steady work of cutting greens and twining them into wreaths which other boys and girls would hang up in their windows. But her face lighted with a smile when the Christmas tree came in at the kitchen door.

"I think it is the most beautiful little Christmas tree I ever saw," she said, "but it needs a wreath to hang underneath the candle."

So they found a wreath from among the ropes and other wreaths which Sarah's father said that they might have, a beautiful red and green Christmas wreath, and they laid it like a crown beneath the wax candle. Now the tree was trimmed!

"It is your tree," Sarah said longingly to Jeanne.

Jeanne shook her dark braids. "Oh, no," she said. "It is Tony's tree."

But Tony also shook his head. "This is Hans' Christmas tree!" said Tony.

Hans shook his flaxen head very hard. "No, sir!" said Hans generously. "This is *our* tree!"

So they set up the little tree at the end of the

block where all the children who were neighbors might enjoy it. They lighted the candle and shared the cakes and the little Christmas tree that had taken so pleasant a walk stood out there under the Christmas stars and was happy and very proud of itself.

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

"Have you any plans for Christmas?"

SURPRISE CHRISTMAS TREE

"Have you any plans for Christmas, Dobbin?" chirped Tramp Sparrow from the snowy road through the Square as he picked up grains from old Dobbin's nose bag. Tramp Sparrow and Dobbin, the Parcel Post horse, were good friends,

winter and summer, Sparrow singing his throat out in the City and Dobbin tramping his old feet off carrying the mail.

"Neigh, neigh!" said Dobbin, which sounded very much like no. "Here we have a whole wagon full of Christmas presents for the children. Posty and I have dolls and drums and boxes of candy and games and red mittens and Jack-in-the-Boxes and so many other presents that I can hardly draw my wagon. Neigh, neigh. I am likely to go without oats even until late on Christmas Eve." And with that Dobbin jogged off across the Square.

"Have you any plans for Christmas, Tom?" Tramp Sparrow chirped to the little lame Newsboy who stood with his colored Christmas sheets at the corner where the Square began. Tramp Sparrow and Tom, the Newsboy, were good

friends, winter and summer, Sparrow singing his throat out for Tom, and Tom listening and whistling in reply.

"Oh, no," laughed Tom, for he was a plucky little boy. "There will be extra heavy papers for Christmas Day and I must stay out here by the Square and peddle them until every one is gone. I would like to take home something for my mother and Little Sister but coal costs all I can earn this season. And with that Tom began to whistle, thinking of the Christmas cheer a warm fire would be at home.

"Have you any plans for Christmas, Green Tree?" chirped Tramp Sparrow, as he flew to the very tip-top of the straight tree which grew in the middle of the Square. Tramp Sparrow and the Green Tree were good friends, winter and summer, for the Tree held out its branches to

shelter Sparrow in storms and gave him shelter from the traffic and crowds of the City. It sang to him of the woods when the wind blew through its branches, and tried to keep itself clean in the midst of the City's soot.

"No, no," sang the swaying boughs of the Green Tree, "I have no plans for Christmas except to catch a few stars of snowflakes to hold and light myself by the stars in the sky and try to keep myself as green as possible. This Square was not a very good place to plant an evergreen tree and I am having trouble keeping my color, but I am trying." And with that, the Green Tree sighed among its branches, longing for candles to hold and the sound of children singing as they danced about its roots.

"Have you any plans for Christmas, Santa Claus?" chirped Tramp Sparrow, puffing out his

draggled feathers and trying to look large and important as he lighted for a moment in the doorway of the Toy Shop where he had seen Santa Claus, white beard, red nose, long red cloak and all, including a stuffed pack, going to meet the children for a week. But there was such a crowd around Santa Claus that he did not hear Tramp Sparrow's voice, and Sparrow had to fly away hurriedly, for he saw a little boy buying a popgun. Tramp Sparrow flew to the ridge of the Church roof, but he still sang.

"Santa Claus has a plan for Christmas!" sang the little bird of the City, for he wanted to spread as much cheer as possible. His feet were chilled and he had to keep hopping about to keep warm, but he still sang and chirped and sang and chirped, "Santa Claus has a plan for Christmas!"

As loudly and as cheerfully as he could, Tramp Sparrow sang, and when the wind blew him off the Church roof, he sang on a House window sill. And when the snow was too deep for him on the House window sill he went to the porch of the Community House where there were Christmas candles in the windows and he sang there, for it was a sheltered place, "Santa Claus has a plan for Christmas for us here in the City, for us who are outside."

And because it was the blessed Christmas time, and Tramp Sparrow had so much faith in Santa Claus, and because he sang his faith in just the right places, something nice happened.

"Neigh, neigh," said old Dobbin, the Parcel Post horse, as he jogged toward his barn dragging the empty wagon on Christmas Eve. "No Christmas for me."

But suddenly Dobbin smelled apples: red, juicy, Christmas apples. There was a pile of red apples for Dobbin beneath the Green Tree in the Square. There were carrots and oats and turnips and hay. Christmas feasting for the City's faithful horse.

"No Christmas for me, but a warm fire for us at home," said Tom, the Newsboy, as he sold the last of his Christmas sheets and started across the Square to the cellar where Tony sold bags of coal. But Santa Claus, standing beside the Green Tree in the Square, stopped Tom and put a loaded basket into his cold hands. Food and sweets and a doll and a game were in the basket. Christmas cheer for the City's plucky little Newsboy!

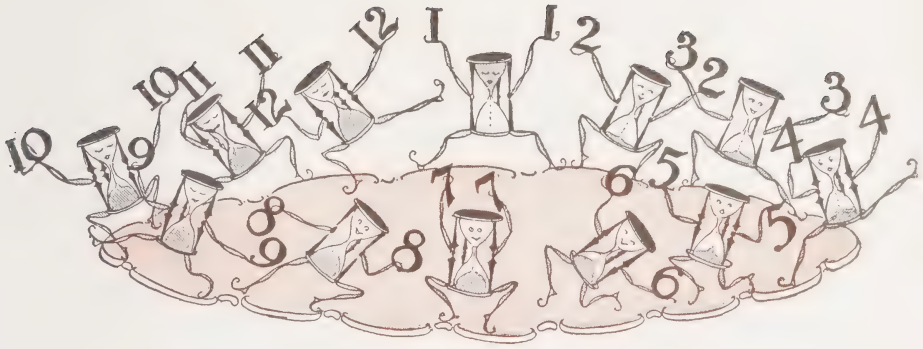
"See the Christmas Tree!" shouted Tom and all the Children of the Streets as they looked at the Green Tree in the Square. From top to bot-

tom it was garlanded with lights, and a great white star blazed on its highest bough. There were Singers come to carol under the Tree's light. Bells rang from the steeple of the Church to welcome Christmas Eve. All at once the City Square was like a wonderland with the lights and the gifts and the carolling.

But when he had a chance to make himself heard, Tramp Sparrow sang as loudly as he could from his Christmas shelter among the branches of the City Christmas Tree. "A fine plan for Christmas," he sang. "Santa Claus' plan and mine!" he chirped. He could be heard, for every body liked Tramp Sparrow.

"Hear the Sparrow singing 'Merry Christmas'!" laughed the Children. "So brave in the cold! We will throw him crumbs all the year!"

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey



The Hours Danced on

THE TALKATIVE CHRISTMAS TREE

"The hours dance on I do believe
It is really, truly Christmas Eve."

So sang the old Family Clock and Little Sally the Sick Girl.

Sally tried to keep up her courage, while her needles went "click, click, click," on this Christmas Eve as she was knitting a scarf for her friend, Bunny Be-Glad.

She said in a sing-song kind of way,

"I ought really to never be sad,

With a friend like Bunny Be-Glad."

It was at this delightful moment that Bunny Be-Glad came to the window with a great Christmas tree.

It was all the little fellow could carry.

Up went the window by magic and in he came.

He blew a whistle, and gifts came on the tree.

Sally said, "I would love to hear the story of Sea Holly."

So the tree began, "Sappho so loved a sailor that she believed the legend that if anyone wears Sea-Holly he or she will be granted a wish.

"She wished for the love of the sailor, but as he did not care for her, she threw away the Holly and jumped into the sea!

"The plant has always been called Sea Holly ever since."

Sally inquired, "Has poinsettia stories to tell?"

He blew a whistle again and lights began to twinkle from the five and twenty little candles upon it.

My! what a wonderful Christmas tree it was, bedecked with candles and presents, and holly, and mistletoe, and poinsettias.

On the top was a silver star.

Bunny Be-Glad curled up and went to sleep while Sally said,

"Will you tell a story to me?
You are such a wonderful Christmas tree."

The tree began to talk. It said,

"On Christmas Eve when we are jolly
I like to tell about the holly.
It grows on a tree high 'tis said,
With evergreen leaves and berries red,
There is mountain holly, and sea-holly too,
Which I may introduce to you."

The tree continued, waving its branches, "Poinsettia is a relation of a plant called 'Snow-on-the-mountain,' though it is red instead of white. Poinsettia lived first in Mexico and was named for a man by the name of Poinsett, a minister to Mexico.

"The red bird sang the praises of Poinsettia and dropped its seeds inside a hotbed near a greenhouse, ever since it has been raised in greenhouses."

Mistletoe began to speak,
"I'll tell you the legend of mistletoe,
It is a story the Druids know.
They always keep in-doors something green,
For, though wood spirits are seldom seen,
They like a refuge from cold and snow,
As any one would surely know.
Remember this story when you see
Mistletoe clinging to a tree."

Sally said, "I will remember what the Druids think, and keep a green plant in my room all winter for the woodland spirits to hide in."

Sally asked the Christmas tree, which was a fir tree, to tell its own story.

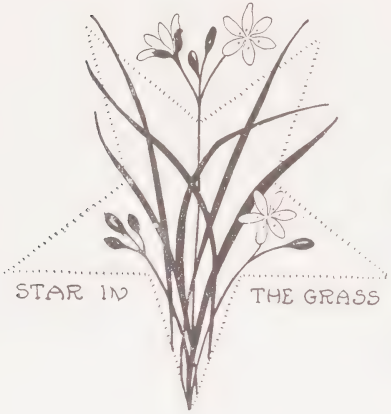
It said, "There are many pretty legends about me. Do you know why children dance around me year after year? It is to keep Santa Claus' helper, that shy little Elf, inside, so he will not reach after your presents and run off with them!

"I will tell another story about myself.

"Once, long ago, a poor woman went out to gather pine cones for her fire. A jolly Elf called to her,

"Come again to this tree, I do not deceive,
Come, shake it well on Christmas Eve."

The star on the Christmas tree told the old, old story of Christmas, and then it said,


STAR IN
THE GRASS

Holly

Mistletoe

SEA HOLLY

"I will tell you about yellow star-grass."

Once upon a time a little star looked down on earth and said, "I would like everyone to notice me; some people do not look up, but down, and some people live in cities where tall buildings cut off the view of the sky. I will make a star wish."

The star said,

"I wish I could be a star-in-the-grass,
A flower seen by all who pass."

The wish came true. The little star came to earth and became a yellow flower with six pointed petals. Soon it was seen everywhere and the children said, "See the star-in-the-grass!"

"The poor woman returned to the tree on Christmas Eve and shook it; down fell so many cones she filled two baskets.

"The jolly Elf was there, as before, and jumped into one basket—

"I will ride in one basket now myself,
Said the Jolly little Elf."

"The poor woman found the baskets very heavy, but made no complaint. When she got home she set the baskets on the table and the Jolly Elf danced round them singing,

"Your cones grow lighter I believe,
As a present on Christmas Eve."

"As the Jolly Elf vanished the cones changed to gold, and the poor woman was made very happy, you may be sure."

Bunny Be-Glad, who had been sleeping with one ear open, said,

"There is a present for you and me
On the Merry Christmas Tree."

He shook the branches.

Down fell a little gold collar just his size.

He shook the branches again.

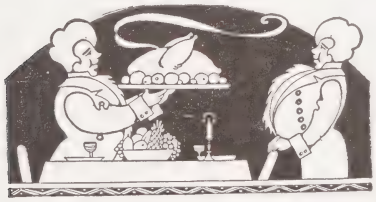
Down fell a little wee box, and in it was a wee ring.

On the ring this thing was said,
"Merry Christmas Sally Sick-a-Bed."

Sally said as she put the little gold ring on her finger,

"I hope it is a magic ring,
On Christmas Eve I'll sing and sing,
So many stories I've learned to tell,
But I wish I could get WELL.
Said Bunny Be-Glad, 'That's the very thing,
It may really be a wishing ring."

From Fifty Fairy Flower Legends—Carolyn Silver June



THE CHRISTMAS WREATH

Boris had been to the primary class of the public school for two months, but he did not know any of the boys and girls very well. This was partly because Boris had come from the other side of the sea and could not speak English very well.

It was partly because he did not know how to play the games that the other children enjoyed and he lived so far away, because his father was a woodcutter and worked at the edge of the town.

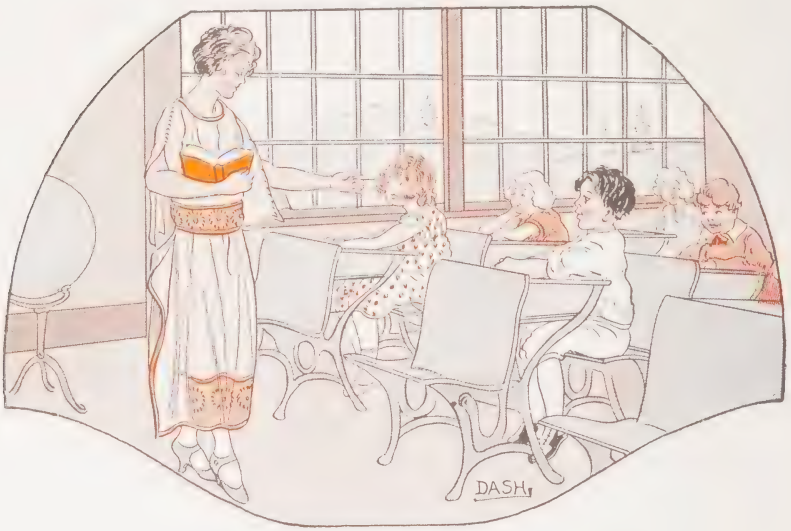
that he had to hurry home from school to his supper.

So Boris was lonely and not very happy, even if the blessed Christmas time was near. He wanted to be like the other little boys and girls, and he wanted to give a present to Miss Frances, his kind teacher. But the children seemed only amused at Boris' big cap, his high red leather boots and his green muffler with fringe. And Boris had not even one penny to pay for a gift.

The primary room looked very beautiful on the last day of school before the Christmas holidays.

The pictures had greens twined around them, and the gifts brought by the children to show their teacher how much they loved her were laid upon her desk.

Before the opening of school they talked about the gifts.



The Primary Room looked very beautiful

"You are neither of you right," Hazel told them. "It will be my box of candy for which Miss Frances will care the most."

Just then Boris came in, looking a little frightened as he went up to the teacher's desk and gave her a package wrapped up in newspaper.

After that the children marched to the assembly room to sing, and then they went back to their

own room and stood about the piano to see Miss Frances' gifts.

On top of them all there lay a beautiful Christmas wreath. It was made of the pine which is the most green at Christmas although it trails along the ground and tries to hide itself.

It was trimmed with the bright red berries of the wintergreen that grow in the forest near the ground pine.

In the middle of the wreath was a small American flag, red, white and blue.

"How pretty!" the children exclaimed, and then they knew, by Boris' smiling face, that the wreath was his Christmas gift to Miss Frances.

No wonder it was the best gift of all, made by a boy's own hands and bearing the Stars and Stripes of his new country! The children wondered why they had not found out before what a good American Boris was. When school was over

he told them about the Christmas trees that grew near his home in Russia and he taught them to play his game of Bear and Stick. They all became very well acquainted and that is one of the best things that can happen to children at Christmas, to be given the gift of friendly feelings toward one another.

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

WHY THE TOP SINGS

Once upon a time and a very, very long time ago, there were no toys for children and it was decided in the Land of Make-Believe that there should be some.

So all the workers of that country, the Gnomes who dug in the earth, and the Brownies who knew the forest so well, and the Fairies who knew all places and all nice things to do, decided to make toys.

They decided also that there should be one beautiful day in every year which would be the Day of Toys for little boys and girls.

Then what a hurrying and bustling and planning began! The Gnomes dug deep down in the earth for strong metals and then started their forge fires in the forest for moulding iron and steel and copper.

By daylight and by starlight one could hear the Gnomes' tiny hammers ringing on their tiny anvils as they forged the toys; toy trains and iron wheels for little carts and runners for sleds and strong tools and small cook-stoves and wee copper pots and pans for the stoves.

The Brownies cut down trees in the forest and drew them back to their workshops on their sleds, and with this wood they carved cuckoo clocks for the children's nurseries and hobby

horses and Noah's Arks and dolls' houses and small tables and chairs and beds for the dolls' houses and boxes from which Jack-in-the-Box jumps with a snap.

The Fairies? Oh, it was wonderful about them! The Fairies made copies of themselves for the children.

With wax from the hives of the sleeping bees, and flax from the fairy fields, and silk which the silkworms had given for their own frocks and slippers, and with lace spun by the spiders for their stockings and veils, the Fairies made dolls.

They shaped their pretty faces and they put in bits of jewels for eyes. They spun flax into braids and curls for the dolls' heads. They fashioned their dresses of silk in all the colors of the rainbow with lace trimming. They made fairly-like dolls for little girls.

And all those creatures who usually slept during the winter stayed awake to watch the making of the toys. And as they watched all that was being done for the Day of Toys the creatures wanted to help.

So the Bee made sweets and the Ants brought sand to fill a sand box in which the smaller of the children might dig.

The Butterfly spared some color from her wings for painting the toys, and the Reindeer offered his strong back for carrying the toys to the children.

It came to be the evening before the Day of Toys and everything was ready. Yes, the toys were made and ready for going to the children. In her tissue paper wrappings the Doll lay opening and shutting her eyes and saying "Mama," when she was squeezed.

The Reindeer was waiting

The Train was able to steam away all by itself along its tracks. The Animals rattled about and roared and growled in the Noah's Ark. The runners of the Sled were so polished and shining that they reflected the light of the bright stars up in the night sky above the Land of Make-Believe. Then, with a snap of his cover, out Jack-in-the-Box jumped.

He looked about him. Then he spied a small toy that lay on its side on the floor beneath the others. "What is this?" asked the Jack-in-the-Box, "and what are you doing here?" The Jack-in-the-Box was disagreeable. "You are very small and insignificant," he said, "to be here in such fine company as ours."

The small toy did look out of place. It had been made of the last piece of a pine tree and it

had but one foot, made of the last bit of metal from the forge of the Gnomes.

It had no trimming save one band of gold color left from the wing of the Butterfly. And the worst of it all was that this Toy lay so closely to the toy whip that whenever the whip cracked itself with joy at going to the children, it hit the poor little wood toy which had only one foot, although it did not intend to be unkind.

"You seem able to do nothing," went on the Jack-in-the-Box as he pulled his head in again. Just before he hooked down his cover he said, "Of course you will be left behind tonight. No child cares for a toy which can do nothing."

This seemed true. The Toy lay there on its side, but all at once it stood erect on its bright little foot.

It tried very hard to be brave and it balanced itself on its one small toe as well as if it had been made with two feet. It tried very hard to join the other Toys that were now crowding themselves toward the door where the Reindeer was waiting to take them to the village at the foot of the hill where the children lived. And as it tried to do this, the small wood Toy discovered that it was dancing!

Round and round, like a whirligig, it spun, keeping up straight and making its way in and out among the other toys faster than they could possibly move.

It did its best to be cheerful, so as it spun along, this small Toy sang. It sang a cheerful small tune like the purring of a nice little cat, or the singing of a teakettle, or the sound of insects in a summer field.

Then the Day of Toys came and the children were happier than they had ever been before with the beautiful things which the Reindeer brought to their houses for their play.

They started the Toy Trains and they coasted on the shining runners of their sleds. They had tea parties for the dolls and they ate the sweets and they laid out Lands of Make-Believe in the sand boxes.

But the toy which the children liked more than any other and which they saved for the first out-door days of the spring was the small one with only one foot and but a single band of color.

It was the one which had been made from the last piece of a pine tree and the last bit of metal from the forge of the Gnomes.

It was the one which could balance itself on its one tiny toe and spin round and round and sing a cheerful tune as it spun.

It was the Top which always sings as it spins of spring which will surely follow the winter time.

Yes, this very small toy from the Land of Make-Believe was your cheerful Top and that was when the Top first learned to spin.

From the Wonderful Tree—Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

OLD MAN HUG-ME-TIGHT'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight likes honey,
But he has no ready money,
And he's very cross, for he has no cap,
To wear, on his long, long winter nap!

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight, the Bear, stood at the entrance to his den and growled and growled, for it was snowing and blowing, and he had not settled down yet to his winter nap.

Old Man Tiny-Tail, the Rabbit, came by next, singing,

"I have to sing, I formed the habit
When I was but a little Rabbit."

Old Man Imitator came swinging by, singing,

"Ho, ho, for the snow, the beautiful snow,
Winter is coming we know, we know."

Then Old Man Hug-Me-Tight growled louder than ever,

"I'm ready for my winter nap,
But I need a new night cap."

Old Man Imitator said,

"Don't you feel so sad because
Christmas is coming with Santa Claus."

Then he swung by his tail from the tree and made comical faces, but Old Man Hug-Me-Tight would not cheer up.

Old Man Sly-Foot, the Wolf, went limpety, limp along, with his little covered basket. He was humming a little song to himself,

"I'll not tell you, though you ask it,
What is in my covered basket!"

Suddenly he came to a stop and set his basket down and said,

"Long years ago I learned to howl,
But tell me, Sir, why do you growl?"

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight replied,
"I'd like to sleep for years and years,
But I'm afraid I'll freeze my ears!"

To this, Old Man Sly-Foot replied,
"Write to Santa Claus, mayhap,
He will bring a new night cap."

So saying, Sly-Foot went limpety, limp, along with his funny little covered basket. The animals always wondered what he carried in that covered basket.

Old Man Builder, the Beaver, came loafing along at this very minute, singing,

"Build for to-day and for to-morrow,
It will save you from much sorrow."

He stopped when he heard such a great growling and asked what was the matter.

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight said,

"If you needed a night cap, you'd not wonder
Why to-day I growl like thunder!"

Old Man Builder was quite interested and said,

"Hang your stocking up with care,
Perhaps you'll find a night cap there."

Then he went along to finish building his wonderful house over on the dam.

At that, Old Man Hug-Me-Tight growled louder than ever, and Tiny-Tail stopped, bowing politely, and said,

"I'm your willing servant, it is true, Sir,
Is there anything that I can do, Sir?"

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight replied,

"I need a night cap, I've been told,
To keep me from the winter cold."

Tiny-Tail thought a few minutes and said,

"Santa's sleigh bells jingle so,
He'll soon be coming o'er the snow."

In a few minutes Old Man Rubber-Neck, the Giraffe, stretched his great neck as he came along, remarking,

"I think I've heard that sound before,
Hug-Me-Tight's growl sounds like a roar."
Old Man Hug-Me-Tight said,
"I may have a sad mishap,
If I have no new night cap."

He was thinking, I am sure, that he might freeze his ears on his long, long winter nap.

Old Man Rubber-Neck had nothing to say further, so he went ambling along, and Old Man Never-Thirst, the Camel, was STUBBORN AND SET, AND WOULDN'T BE MOVED, so he did not stop at the Old Bear's den to hold any conversation.

Old Man Plenty-Shy peeped out from the bushes and said nothing, though he did a heap of thinking, and Old Man Roar-A-Bit was so busy roaring over his own troubles, that he paid no attention to any one else.

Old Man Imitator was a great reader, and he could imitate anything anybody else did, so

he set his wits to work, and called all the animals together.

They held a council in the woods that December day. Old Man Imitator said,

"Why does he sleep all winter, I wonder,
And why does he growl like distant thunder?"

Old Man Sly-Foot suggested,

"He goes to sleep, as every one knows,
To save some fuel, I really suppose!"

The animals applauded at that, and Old Man Builder suggested,

"I don't think Old Sly-Foot's right,
Perhaps he sleeps to save his lights."

They all laughed at that idea, and Tiny-Tail suggested,

"Perhaps he sleeps here in the wood
Because he's short of winter food."

At this, they all looked serious, for they all knew what it was to be hungry in winter.

Old Man Imitator said,

"I'll give an invitation, hearty,
To Hug-Me-Tight's Pound Party."

All were in favor of a pound party, but Old Man Never-Thirst. He was STUBBORN AND SET, AND WOULDN'T BE MOVED, even though he could have carried so many things upon his back.

The animals sang,

"I'll take a pound of sugar and tea,
And pretty near always they could agree."

Old Man Never-Thirst said,

"If I had a pound I wouldn't give any,
Even if I bought it for a dime or a penny."

He was a selfish Old Fellow, as one could see with one eye shut, and he was always STUBBORN AND SET, AND WOULDN'T BE MOVED.

All the rest of the animals planned for a surprise party on Christmas Eve, and they even

bought a great stocking and filled it with good things for Old Man Hug-Me-Tight.

Old Man Sly-Foot suggested,

"Perhaps now he will stay awake
To enjoy his presents for our sakes."

They all applauded, even though they did not know what he carried in his little covered basket.

Every hour it grew nearer and nearer Christmas Eve.

At last all the animals came together.

They had pounds and pounds of good things to eat.

As they came near the den, they heard the Old Man growling,

"A night cap, a night cap,
A fortune for a night cap,
I don't care for Christmas a rap,
I want a winter night cap!"

At that, the animals whispered nervously. They hoped some one had brought a night cap. They

did hope among other things the night cap had not been forgotten.

In they trooped, calling, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas."

They put their presents down on the floor and Old Man Hug-Me-Tight opened each one in turn, and thanked his friends politely. So far, there was no night cap.

Suddenly, without any warning, and in a single instant of time, they had a real surprise, for in rode their old friend, the Popular Pedlar, on the Camel's back.

Old Man Never-Thirst, the Camel, shouted,

"One good turn deserves another,
I love the Pedlar like a brother."

He still wore the wonderful blanket bought from the Popular Pedlar.

The Pedlar bowed and scraped and said,

"You see I always have the knack,
To carry something in my pack."

They all held their breath, and no one dared to wink an eye-lash even, while the Popular Pedlar began to unstrap his pack.

He said,

"Try to be patient just a minute,
I have left, just one thing in it!"

Old Man Who-Who peeped in the den, hooting merrily. He sang a song about a night cap.

The Pedlar unstrapped this strap, and unbuckled this buckle, and at last he opened his pack.

Old Man Rubber-Neck was first to see that he had left in it, a white lace night cap, with blue ribbon bows upon it.

The Popular Pedlar put it on Hug-Me-Tight's head, saying,

"Though your head I did not measure,
To present it gives me pleasure."

It fitted so well that Old Man Hug-Me-Tight growled pleasantly,

"Any one can take a nap,
When he wears a new night cap."

He was so happy that he hugged everyone, though Old Man Plenty-Shy was the last to get a hug, for, as usual, he stood in the corner.

They all sang,

"Old Man Imitator is bright,
He can also read and write,
Hug-Me-Tight is glad because
The Pedlar played Old Santa Claus,
To our homes we'll journey back,
Hurrah, hurrah for the Pedlar's pack!"

They went home two and two, on that Merry Christmas Eve.

Old Man Hug-Me-Tight had not a stingy bone or a lazy bone in his body, so he divided his presents with the Popular Pedlar.

I wonder if he slept all winter. I forgot to ask him.

From Comical Circus Stories—Laura Rountree Smith

CHRISTMAS PARTY

For the Christmas Party the Twins wrote their own invitations containing the following verse,

A Christmas Party in old December
Is one we'll very well remember,
So come at seven by the clock,
Step inside, you need not knock.

(*Hour—place.*)

A gayly colored stocking was painted in the corner of each invitation.

When the guests arrived they were greeted with "Merry Christmas" and told to search for their stockings.

The search began and as soon as a child found a stocking he pinned it up on a home-made mantel piece, made of a screen covered with paper, lined off as bricks. He found his own name on the mantel piece and pinned his stocking under it.

As these stockings were made of gay colored paper the mantel piece soon had a festive air.

The children played THE GAME OF THE CHRISTMAS STAR.

One child is chosen to carry a large pasteboard star. He runs in and out among them as they stand in a circle. They all sing, tune "Lightly Row."

Who will go? Who will go?
Guided by the Christmas star?
Stars above, stars you love,
Shine where'er you are,
Christmas star that shines at night
Making all the world more bright,
Shining bright, all the night,
Merry Christmas star.

The child with the star drops it behind a child who now changes places with him and the game continues.

Each child may have a tiny star with the words of the song upon it. They played the game of, Santa Claus Pack.

The children choose Santa Claus who gives the children names of toys.

They form a circle about him, and he tells a story saying, "I will pack up now and I want my top and my horn," naming any toys, and the

Drawing Out of Santa's Pack

children who had these names run to a place agreed upon as goal, the last one to get there is out of the game.

Santa Claus says, when the game is ended,

"Reach into my sack, what can you see,

A chance to trim a Christmas Tree."

Each child draws out of Santa's pack an envelope in which is a Christmas tree cut out of green cardboard with slits in it, and gay toys cut from advertisements and pasted on tag cardboard.

The game consists in placing toys in slits in the tree, and the one who has the most artistic arrangement wins the prize.

Another game enjoyed was, Filling the Stocking. A stocking is drawn on cambric stretched across a doorway. It has a large opening in the top, and the children try to toss little rubber balls into it. The children who are successful receive little cards shaped like stockings.

They next wrote on cardboard stocking-shaped cards all the toys they could think of, and the one who had the longest list when a bell rang won the prize, a tiny stocking made of netting and filled with peanuts.

At tables were found home-made picture puzzles, cut-up pictures of toys, mounted on cardboards, cut from advertisements in magazines.

They next played the Game of Christmas Candle.

The children sat in two lines opposite each other and chose the child with the candle, which may be an electric candle or torch if desired.

This child skips round each line saying,

Candle light, candle bright,
What can you see by candle light?

They all rise, clap hands and say,

"What do we see, you may believe
We see Santa Claus on Christmas Eve."

The child with the candle then runs through the line saying,

"What you say is very true,
But don't let Santa Claus see you."

At the word, "you," all rise, skip to opposite line and the child with the candle tries to get into any seat, and the child left out takes the candle, and the game continues.

To select gifts one child at a time is blindfolded, whirled around, and then told to go to the

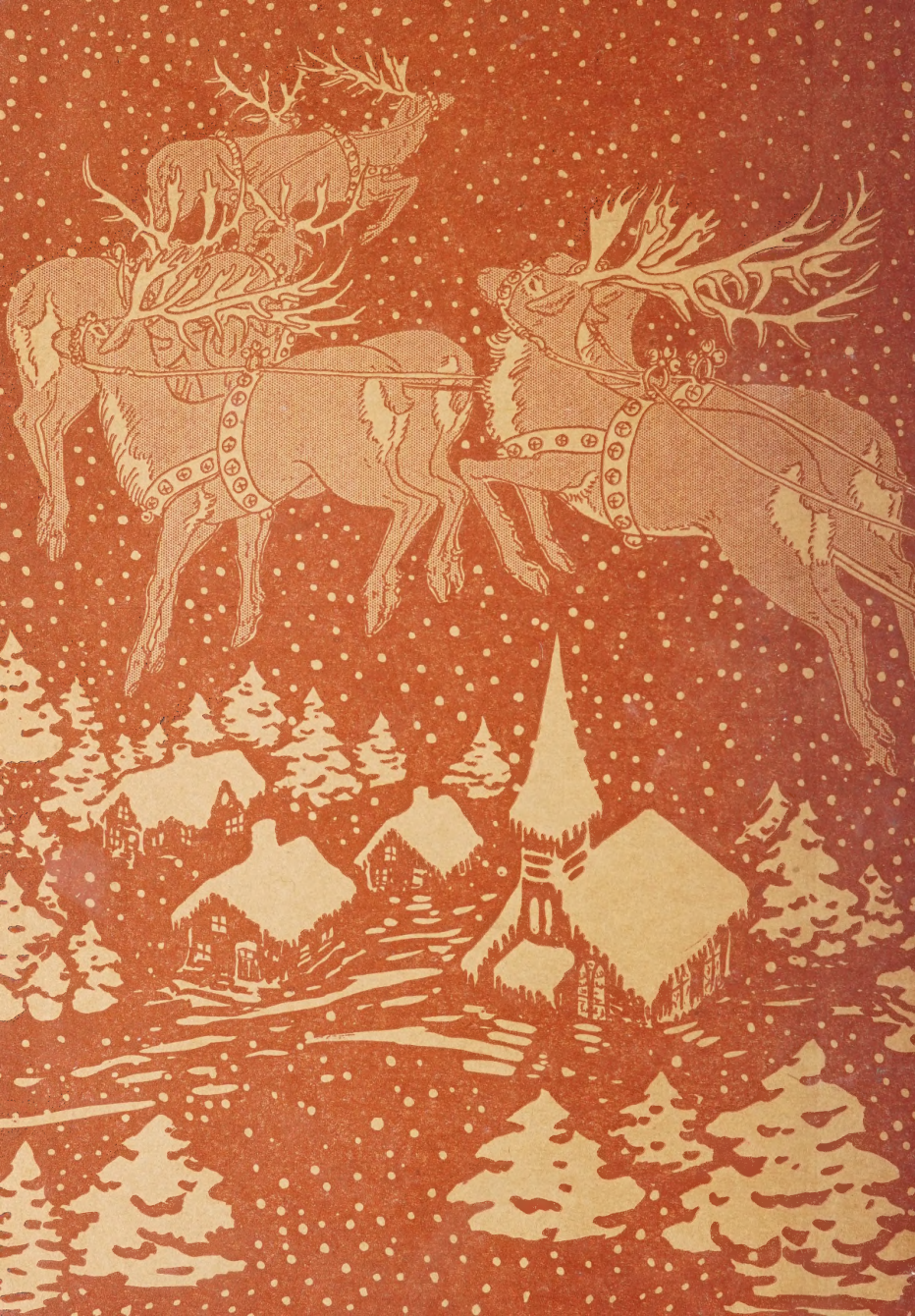
Christmas tree and wave a wand so as to touch a toy on the tree. As soon as he or she touches the toy, the children watching cry,

"Be you girl, or be you boy,
Here is your Merry Christmas toy!"

The child's eyes are uncovered. He takes the toy he touched, and the next child comes and so on.

As the little guests went away,
Said Penny Party to Polly Play,
I wish Christmas came every day."

From the Party Twins—Laura Rountree Smith



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